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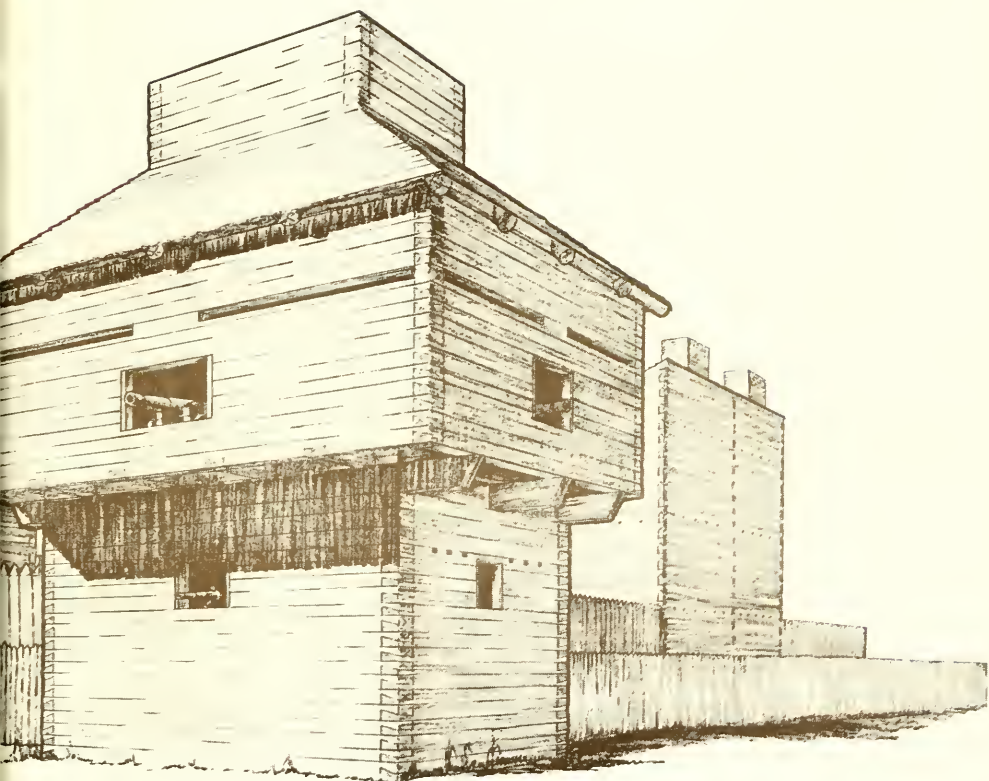
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Snow, Dorothea J., 1909-

The fort at the three rivers







# THE FORT AT THE THREE RIVERS

Allen County Public Library  
900 Webster Street  
PO Box 2270  
Fort Wayne, IN 46801-2270

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# THE FORT AT THE THREE RIVERS

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by  
DOROTHEA SNOW

A project of Pi Chapter, Psi Iota Xi Sorority  
and the  
Allen County - Fort Wayne Historical Society

in cooperation with

The Public Library  
of Fort Wayne and Allen County

1963

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## FOREWORD

In May, 1964, Pi Chapter of Psi Iota Xi Sorority made a challenge grant to the Allen County Fort Wayne Historical Society to research the historical data necessary to build an accurate reconstruction of the Old Fort. The grant was to be used, in part, to employ research scholars, to prepare and publish their findings and to bring to Fort Wayne for the first time a documented account of her earliest history. The resulting body of documents and source materials is now housed in the Historical Museum.

It is on this Psi Ote Collection that Dorothea Snow has based her book, an accurate account of early Fort Wayne, written as a gift to the children of our city. Pi Chapter of Psi Iota Xi believes that bringing to life the story of the beginning of this community is as important a contribution as we could make to our fellow citizens.

We are honored, therefore, to present Miss Snow's book to this and all future generations. We are proud to have had a part in preserving and bringing to our children their heritage.

Pi Chapter, PSI IOTA XI



## Chapter 1

### THE STRUGGLE FOR EMPIRES-- INDIAN, FRENCH, BRITISH

The forks of rivers have always been favorite sites for man to settle. This was especially true in earlier times.

There were many reasons for this. A water supply was close at hand. The settlement was easier to defend as the approach of enemies on the water could readily be seen. Water offered a quick and easy means of transportation. Where one or more rivers met it was possible for canoes, pirogues (hollowed out logs used by fur traders) and boats to go in several directions.

The forks of the Three Rivers--the St. Joseph, the St. Marys and the Maumee--is such a place. And, because of the portage, or "carrying place" as the Indians called it, between the Maumee and Wabash River, it was coveted by the Indians and white men alike.

Canoes or boats could travel on the St. Joseph River from the St. Lawrence waterway and Lake Erie down to the headwaters of the Maumee. Here they had only a short way to carry their canoes or boats to the Little River, which flowed into the Wabash River. On the waters of the Wabash they could go, without stopping again, to the Ohio and Mississippi as far as New Orleans.

For a long time the forks of the Three Rivers was considered one of the most strategic positions in

the New World. There is a French map of the Wabash-Maumee area dated 1632. There is good reason to believe that Rene Robert Cavalier, Sieur de la Salle may have used the Wabash-Maumee route in 1697 when he traveled through the region.

The Miami Indians, then a powerful tribe, chose the forks of the Three Rivers as the site of their principal village. Because blackberries grew in abundance there they called the village Kekionga, or, "blackberry patch." Kekionga was located in what we call Lakeside today.

The Miamis controlled the portage between the Maumee and Little rivers for many years. They sometimes collected a toll from each canoe or boat that used it.

There were several portages between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River but none more convenient than the one at Kekionga. Travellers, both Indian and white, had to walk about eight miles overland to use the all-water route from Quebec or Montreal to New Orleans. To reach "Chikago" from Kekionga, one had only to paddle up the St. Joseph River and cross another short portage to the St. Joseph of Lake Michigan.

The French were the first white men to use the portage regularly. It was a handy way of transporting the furs in which they were doing a big business.

As early as 1686 they saw the importance of the position where the Three Rivers meet. They built a small fort, or trading post, at the spot where Superior Street and St. Marys River now meet. They called it Fort Miami.

This fort was built for the use of the fur traders (coureurs de bois) who lived in the area and plied the rivers with their furs and trade goods. From here it was easy to transport the furs to Montreal or Quebec

or to New Orleans. They could also maintain communications with French Louisiana and the Illinois villages they controlled.

Meantime, the British colonists along the Atlantic wanted to share in the profitable fur trade. English traders based at Pittsburgh challenged French control of the pelt business. In 1747 a group of Indians friendly to the British traders burned Fort Miami, the first of several skirmishes between the two nations over the Great Lakes region.

Because the burned fort's location had not been considered healthy, the commandant, Monsieur Raymond, and his garrison of twenty-two men built another fort on the east side of the St. Joseph River near the Miami villages.

In one of the huts clustered about this French outpost an important man was born. He was Jean Baptiste Richardville and he came into the world about the year 1761. Near this hut there stood an old apple tree of which the chief spoke with great affection.

"It bore fruit even when I was a little boy," he said.

The story of the apple tree has come down to us today and a marker near the Columbia Street bridge commemorates it.

This French fort was captured by the British in 1760. This was during the time the British were trying to take control of the fur trade from the French.

For a time after, the Union Jack flew over Fort Miami and the Maumee-Wabash portage. Soon, however, there were stirrings among the red men. Pontiac, Chief of the Ottawas, began an effort to expel the British from the entire western country. Soon the Indians attacked all the British forts and captured them, including Fort Miami.

Pontiac's conspiracy was quelled and an uneasy peace was restored on the frontier. At the beginning

of the American Revolution the British wanted to keep the Indians as allies against the Americans. The Indians agreed to fight with them for gifts of food and firearms. They massacred hundreds of American settlers on the western frontier and burned and pillaged their homes.

In the years just before the American Revolution, Fort Miami was not regularly occupied. Pontiac stayed there for a short time in the fall of 1766 and then moved on to the Wabash. While the British were in control of the Three Rivers the number of Miami Indians at Kekionga seemed to have declined. Only about four hundred lived there in 1771 and in 1774 there were about two hundred.



Chief Little Turtle. Miami war chief he defeated both Generals Harmar and St. Clair. He died in 1812 and was buried on Lawton Place. Artifacts from his grave may be seen at the Historical Museum.



## Chapter 2

### ANTHONY WAYNE BUILDS A FORT

After the Revolution the Americans did not immediately garrison the fort at Three Rivers. The location, however, soon became a point of interest to the Confederation Congress and the Washington Administration.

In 1784 George Washington wrote to the President of Congress, Richard Henry Lee:

"Would it not be worthy of the wisdom and attention of Congress to have the western waters well explored, the navigation of them fully ascertained and accurately laid down and a complete and perfect map made of the country, at least as far westerly as the Miamis, running to the Ohio, and Lake Erie, and to see how the waters of these communicate with the Wabash? for I cannot forbear observing that the Miami village (Kekionga) points to a very important post for the Union."

In his report to Congress, July 10, 1787, Secretary of War Henry Knox recommended a chain of posts in the Old Northwest "to awe the savages, cover the surveyors, and prevent (British) intrusions." One location he mentioned for such a post was at the headwaters of the Maumee River.

So to defend the frontier and American settlers living there preparations were made for a military campaign. It was put in command of Josiah Harmar. The army, poorly trained and poorly supplied, was soundly beaten by the Indians under the leadership of their great chief, Little Turtle.

It was during this campaign that a detachment of six hundred men under Colonel John Hardin reached the Indian towns at the forks of the Maumee River. Colonel Hardin leaves a good description of what he

found there.

There were seven Indian towns there at the time, he wrote. Omee Town was the Principal Miami Village. A large number of French traders lived there. Omee Town was situated on the east bank of the St. Joseph River, or north side of the Maumee, directly opposite the mouth of the St. Marys River.

On the opposite bank of the St. Joseph River stood another Miami village of thirty houses. Three miles up from the mouth of the St. Marys River were two Delaware villages, with forty-five houses. Another Delaware village was situated on the east bank of the St. Joseph River two or three miles from its mouth. There were thirty-five houses there.

Three miles down the Maumee River were two Shawnee villages. One of the villages was called Chillicothe and in it were fifty-eight houses. Across the river from Chillicothe was another Shawnee village of sixteen houses.

After Harmar's defeat American prestige on the frontier fell to a new low. It looked for awhile that the Ohio Valley with the portage at Three Rivers would fall to the British after all.

The next year, 1791, another army was sent to accomplish the same purpose. Under the command of Arthur St. Clair, Governor of the Northwest Territory, this campaign was also poorly planned. St. Clair and his men were beaten by the Indians under Little Turtle near Fort Recovery, Ohio. One-third of the force was killed.

President Washington then chose General Anthony Wayne, hero of the American Revolution, to head a campaign to try once again to defeat the Indians.

General Wayne determined to take a well-trained and -equipped army into the wilderness. He decided to take all the time necessary to prepare such a force. He spent a long time organizing and training

his army.

Indian scouts kept Little Turtle well informed on the size and training of Wayne's army at Fort Washington (Cincinnati). Little Turtle knew it would not be easy to defeat this well-trained and -equipped army as it had been to defeat the armies of Harmar and St. Clair.

When General Wayne at last started on his march through the forests toward the Three Rivers the Indian scouts watched his every move. Because he was constantly on the alert for attack the Indians called him, "He Who Never Sleeps."

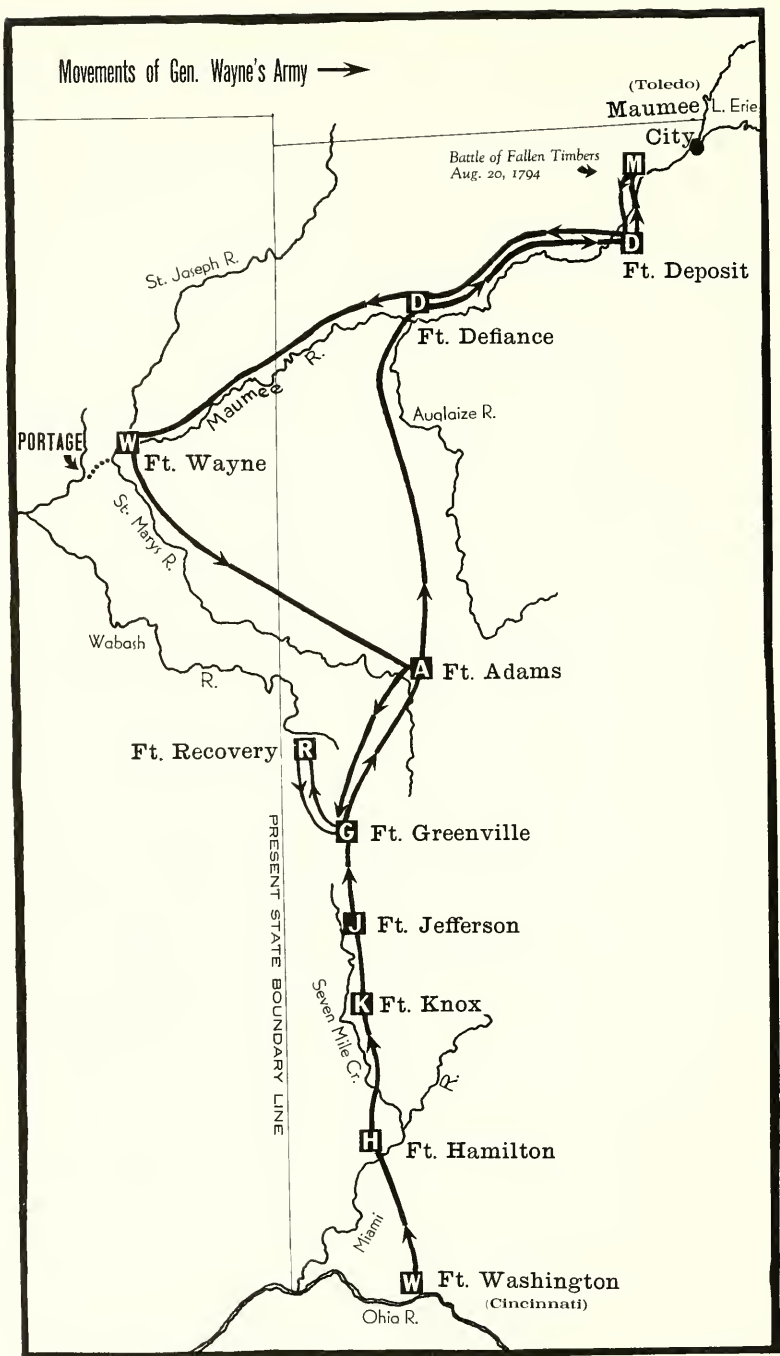
General Wayne met the tribes at a place where, a short time before, a tornado had blown down many trees. At the Battle of Fallen Timbers (near Maumee, Ohio), Wayne and his army defeated the Indians under the Shawnee Chief Blue Jacket and put them to rout.

On September 17, 1794, General Wayne and his army reached the junction of the Three Rivers. Following Washington's orders, he planned an American fort there. The next day he chose the spot where it would be erected.

Work began on the fort at once. Wayne knew that by spring most of the enlistments of the men in his army would be over. He decided to build a small but strong fort that could be held against attack by a small force.

Two hundred men started to work on two blockhouses and a square palisade. A separate blockhouse was also raised in front of the fort. A curtain of pickets with two strong blockhouses at the angles were surrounded by a ditch to keep the Indians out.

It was important to make the fortifications large enough to contain substantial quantities of provisions in order that a siege might be resisted. Inside the fort there should be space and provision for a well, a garden and a powder magazine.



As the construction went on it seemed there would be no more danger of Indian attack. Boats were being built at the same time in which to bring provisions from Fort Defiance, some distance to the east.

By October 19 the fort was well enough along to be occupied. The troops then enjoyed their first day of rest in four weeks. On October 21 a volunteer brigade returned from a trip to Fort Greenville for supplies. Wayne then dismissed them and sent them back home, they being, he said, "of no further service." The volunteers had brought with them 100 horse-loads of flour and coffee. More supplies were a few days behind them.

Three days later the 250-foot square fort was formally named Fort Wayne by Colonel John Hamtramck. A ceremony accompanied the six companies of the army as they marched into the fort. Fifteen rounds of cannon were fired and three cheers were given as Hamtramck took command.

In a letter of the same date, Anthony Wayne outlined the importance of the fort to the colonel. He said, in part, "It may well be esteemed the key between the navigable waters of the Gulph of Mexico and St. Lawrence as well as between the Indian tribes settled along the margins of those waters, and as such it has always been considered both by the French and British who made it the grand deposit for their Indian warehouses or store. . . ."

General Wayne believed the incomplete fortifications could withstand Indian attack. But he did have a problem of getting supplies to this western outpost. He hoped in the near future to supply both Fort Defiance and Fort Wayne with enough provisions to last until the following spring. The Maumee River system was to be used to develop a supply line "as soon as water and circumstances permit."

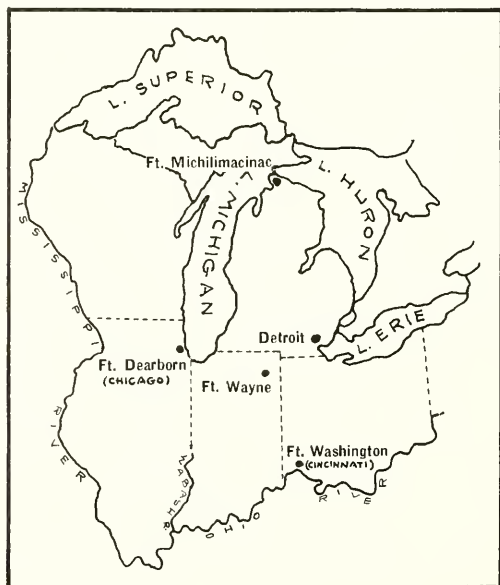
Leaving Hamtramck and his troops to finish

the fort, General Wayne set out for Greenville with the rest of the army on October 28.

Before he left, General Wayne told Colonel Hamtramck to maintain a good military atmosphere, attempt to keep aware of enemy movements and intentions, but to remain willing to listen to peace offers. This had been Wayne's policy since the beginning of his campaign. "If representatives of the hostile tribes should appear in Fort Wayne," he told Hamtramck, "treat them with the utmost courtesy and send them on to Green Ville."

The Indians showed no signs of seeking peace until November. But the discouragement of defeat at Fallen Timbers, and the fact that the British had not come to their aid, caused them to reconsider. Little Turtle and Five Medals were among those who came to Fort Wayne to ask about peace terms.

The Indians were met at the fort with a salute of small arms and cannon fire "as a rejoicing on account of their arrival." They and others agreed to meet with General Wayne in June, 1795.





## Chapter 3

### GARRISON DUTY

Winter of 1794-1795 was peaceful at the fort. The fur trade went on as usual. While peace was being sought with the Indians construction of the fort went on, when the weather permitted.

But gloom soon settled over the fort. Colonel Hamtramck wrote that life was solitary at Fort Wayne and nothing but sweet hope kept him going. At the same time he tried to keep his troops cheerful and well-behaved by keeping them busy.

In January and February it snowed heavily. Hamtramck tried to take advantage of the deep snow to haul timbers to the fort. The timbers were brought to the fort but the weather was much too cold for any construction.

He was hampered by having too few men. The garrison had been reduced through the winter by loss of men ordered back to Greenville, terms of service ending, sickness and desertion.

By mid-March Hamtramck had only fifty men able to work. He said he needed five hundred. "May next (1795) we have a vast deal of work to do," he complained "and few men to do it with."

Still the fort was considered a keystone of an expanding northwestern defense system. As part of a planned system of forts and trading stations it was thought important to peace on the northwestern frontier.

Spring came and with it signs of new trouble with the British and the Indians. A number of British were trying to inflame the Indians against the Americans. The most successful was Reverend Edmund Burke of River Raisin, between Lake Erie and Detroit. He began giving corn to the Indians with which he

added anti-American advice. Hamtramck wanted to capture Burke. He told Anthony Wayne about it. His plan was to use two Frenchmen who liked the Americans, but no one knows what Anthony Wayne did about it.

Fortunately there was no serious Indian trouble that winter. Boats were used during the winter to carry supplies up the Miami River from Fort Washington (Cincinnati) to Fort Greenville, on the way to Fort Wayne. When the water was low, artificial means were employed to raise the stream.

Some supplies were pushed up the Miami and over the portage to the St. Marys River and Auglaize Rivers. By June, water in the Miami was so low that flatbottomed boats filled with supplies could go no further than Fort Hamilton. General Wayne had to then admit that using the water route regularly for large quantities of supplies was not practical. Fortunately there were enough pack horses and escorts to do the job. Still Wayne hoped for rains so he could use the water route again.

Wayne's other big problem was to make a peace treaty with the Indians and adjust boundaries. This was finally done August 3, 1795 at Fort Greenville.

The Indians had wanted to meet at their old town Kekionga. "Let us bury the hatchet where it was raised," they said. But Wayne replied he wished to make the agreement on the "unbloody ground" of Greenville. He also said it would be impossible to get enough supplies to Fort Wayne to feed and care for all those who would gather for the signing.

General Wayne, however, had another reason for wanting the meeting at Greenville. Tarhe, the Crane, a Wyandot chief, had told him that the plea to hold the meeting on the old Indian meeting ground was a trick.

"The red men will make the meetings last as

long as they can," the old Indian told him. "When the food and supplies of the white men run out they will attack the fort."

"Should they prove treacherous," Wayne said, "we should be placed in an unpleasant position."

The Treaty at Greenville convinced the Indians of the hopelessness of their cause without British support. It opened the territory to the American government for survey and settlement.

Supply problems plagued the fort during the years between 1795 and 1802. The government hired contractors whose job was to see that supplies were brought in. They failed to provide enough food and equipment needed by the garrison and what they did bring was of poor quality.

Fort Wayne, being so far out in the wilderness, was hard to provision. Water communication was unreliable. Land transportation was difficult as it was almost impossible to drag wagons through paths cut through forest, prairie and swamp. When and where wagons could not go, pack horses, with smaller loads, had to be used to transport the burden.

Indians came to the fort and were given supplies also. The issues were mostly food and blankets, though tobacco was also given.

In 1796 Major Thomas Pasteur took over as commandant at the fort at Three Rivers. He served until 1798 when Colonel Thomas Hunt was appointed. Their problems were much the same as those of Colonel Hamtramck, discipline and supplies.

During his first year at the fort a son was born to Colonel Hunt and his wife. The baby, John Elliott Hunt, was the first child born within the stockade of old Fort Wayne.

During Colonel Hunt's tenure as commandant he undertook the task of building a new fort to replace the hastily constructed blockhouses and pickets erected

by General Wayne's troops six years before. It is believed this fort was completed just before Colonel Hunt left in 1800.

Wayne's fort had been built on a site at the northwest corner of present East Berry and Clay streets. Colonel Hunt had the new fort built a short distance to the north.

There is a record of a mill being built in 1802 on the banks of the St. Marys River. It was situated on a tract of land about one and a half miles from the garrison. Called "Blue Jacket's Place," the land was sold for the sum of eight hundred and twenty dollars.

Builder and owner of the mill was a man named Daniel Landon. His mill and improvements were considered necessary to the agency and military station. It is stated that "the distance of the fort from any other mill, or any white settlement, surrounded by savages, with one road thereto, and that nearly impassable, and the extravagant price of provisions, rendered all the operations of Landon absolutely necessary to the government, and was so considered by all the public authorities of the place."

Landon supplied the post with provisions and found a ready market at home for the entire produce of his farm and products from his mill until September 12, 1812.

At that time the fort was besieged by the British and Indians and the mill and all the buildings and produce on the farm were destroyed. Cattle and horses were also killed or driven off by the Indians.

Heirs of Landon later tried to get the government to make good the loss but were unsuccessful. So far as is known Landon's Mill was the first erected in the area of the Three Rivers.

## Chapter 4

### CALM BEFORE THE SAVAGE STORM

In the first years after Fort Wayne was established by General Wayne, it was a quiet backwater spot on the outer fringes of the American frontier. The Indians were peaceful and trusted that the treaty of Greenville protected them and their lands from further expansion by the white settlers. Back east the fort at Three Rivers was considered as a distant, placid garrison.

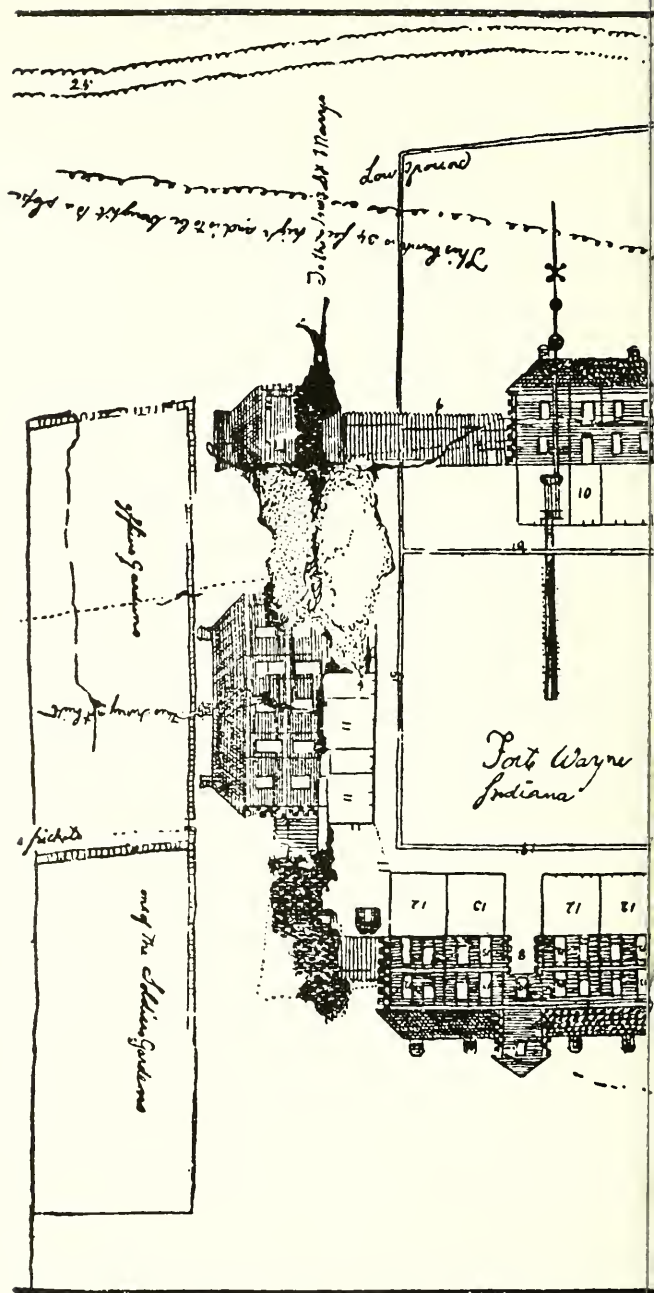
This peaceful scene began to fade in 1802. In that year the fort began to serve a more varied function.

During the previous year, Little Turtle, chief of the Miami Indians, and William Wells, Indian agent friendly to both white men and red, had visited Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It was during this visit that General Washington presented Little Turtle with the sword that was found in his grave and is now exhibited at the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Museum.

Little Turtle asked the American government for the establishment of an Indian factory (trading post) at Fort Wayne. He also asked for help in teaching his people how to raise grain and food and become farmers. His suggestions were well received and on July 1, 1802 John Johnston was made head of a new Fort Wayne Indian factory.

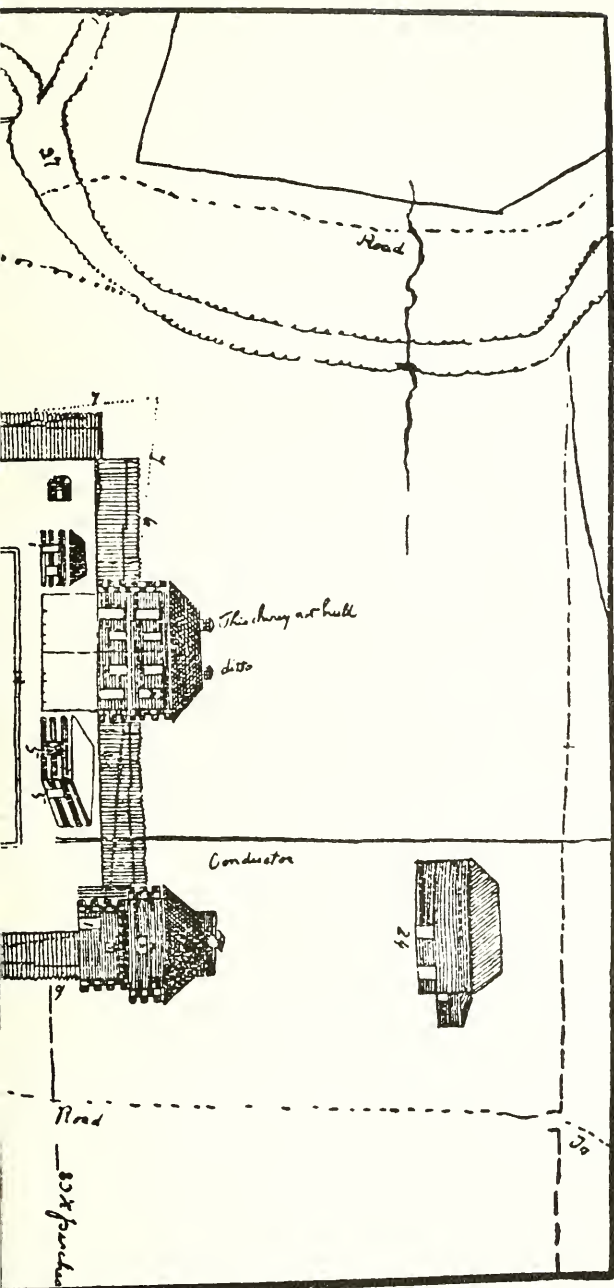
The purpose of such a factory was to sell the Indians white men's goods in exchange for furs and so preserve their friendship. It was also a way of getting them into debt for which they would be forced to cede more of their land.

In 1802 Fort Wayne also became the site of an official Indian agency. The agency took care of political matters for the Indians. William Wells was ap-



Captain John Whistler's drawing of Fort Wayne built, 1815-1816. The fortification proper included soldiers' and officers' barracks, commanding officer's house, magazine, hospital and storage buildings.





The outlying Indian Department and civilian area boasted an Indian agent's house, council house, bake oven, private residences and many storage buildings. The original of this drawing is in the National Archives.

along the same line. He used the money the government had allotted to the Indians.

Richard Palmer, a blacksmith, and David Stinchcomb, a carpenter, were hired by Wells to work among the several nations. They stayed more than five years. During this time over forty houses were built outside the palisades of the Fort at Three Rivers. Over 300 acres of land were cleared. The Indians also received cattle and hogs.

In 1804 Major John Whipple became commandant of the Fort. In 1804, also, there arrived in Fort Wayne a French family named Maloch. It consisted of the father, Jean Baptiste Maloch, his wife and granddaughter, Angeline Chapeteau.

It has been noted that, when she arrived, Angeline was a bright young girl with fiery red hair. The Indians called her "Golden Hair," and they became so fond of her the Miamis adopted her into their tribe. Thereafter Angeline used her influence with the Indians to help the white people.

In 1806 the Quakers made another attempt to civilize the Indians. Mrs. Catherine Shaw, a Maryland Quakeress, was assured a safe and comfortable passage to the "Upper Wabash Indian Country." There she was to instruct the Indians in domestic manufacturing. William Wells was to help her and furnish articles that she might need.

The most successful was William Kirk, who labored among the Miamis and the Shawnees from 1806 to 1809. Thomas Jefferson stated that Kirk was being placed among the Indians in the Fort Wayne area to teach them farming, carpentry, smithery and domestic arts.

Kirk was instructed to work among the Indians who were in turn to teach other Indians what he had taught them. In the spring of 1807 Kirk brought his brother and five other young men to help him. They

reached Fort Wayne on April 20, after buying implements at Cincinnati.

William Kirk and William Wells, Indian agent, did not get along very well. Kirk felt that Wells was working against him because Wells wanted to be in charge of the project himself. Wells denied this. Kirk was later dismissed from his post.

The year 1807 brought a new commandant to the Fort at Three Rivers. His name was Captain Nathan Heald. Records show him to have been unusually popular at the post.

In a letter to a friend, Lieutenant Philip Ostrander, upon his arrival at Fort Wayne to serve in the garrison, observed: "On my arrival at this post (Fort Wayne) I was received with the utmost politeness by Captain Heald, who continues to show me every flattering attention. Indeed, sir, by every officer at Detroit and at this place I have been treated with the utmost liberality and respect. The very day of my arrival I was requested to dine with Captain William Wells (the Indian agent); and today by Colonel John Johnston, our present factor (superintendent of the government 'factory') at this post." It seemed then that civilization was beginning to show itself at this outpost in the wilderness.

However, by 1808 there was reason for concern on the frontiers of the United States. Indian bitterness over the cessions of their land and the onrush of settlers posed problems for the government. But it did not change government policy toward the red man. During this time other efforts were being made to train the Indians in farming and the white man's ways.

Still the Indians continued to resist. One Delaware Indian commented: "This man (Kirk) tries his horse in vain. He would better stay at home and work for himself as he pleases. We do not need anyone to teach us how to work. If we want to work we know

how to do it according to our own way and as it pleases us."

In addition to Indian resistance, British impressment of United States seamen into its navy and restrictions of United States trade were building fear of a war with England.

Because the British feared an U.S. invasion of Canada they worked hard among the Indians trying to win them to their side. This task was made much easier because the Indians were already bitter at the Americans for taking their land.

In the summer of 1807 there was reported to be high tension among the Indians and a high volume of traffic to and from The Prophet's camp near Greenville. By August 1 it was admitted there was a "high state of alarm."

Believing the western posts and settlements were in danger it was advocated that a preventative strike be made against the Canadas to keep the British from turning upon the American frontier.

William Wells also reported a flow of warriors to The Prophet's camp. Other councils were being held. The potentially loyal Indians around Fort Wayne were confused by belts and wampum and councils that met and passed. Wells continued to advocate hard measures to counter The Prophet.

The winter of 1807-1808 was one of watchful waiting. William Wells said there was no doubt that The Prophet was a British agent and that his influence should be destroyed as quickly as possible.

At the end of January Indians, mostly Potawatomies and northern lakes Indians, began flocking to Fort Wayne. These Indians had been with The Prophet the previous year and had neglected to grow any food. Now they were "near starvation."

William Wells, as Indian agent, felt he had to feed them or they would steal and plunder when spring

came. Wells advised the Indians attached to Fort Wayne to improve themselves where they were rather than adhere to The Prophet.

On May 25, 1808 The Prophet, with twelve of his followers, visited Fort Wayne. He continued to urge the Indians to take up the tomahawk and destroy the whites.

On September 15 Governor Harrison came to a parley with the Indians at Fort Wayne. The Indians presented their grievances and the Governor did his best to settle them. On September 30 the Indians signed away over three million more acres of land for more annuities (grants of money) from the government.

The Fort Wayne treaty flouted the wishes of Tecumseh and The Prophet. They attempted to further organize the tribes to resist any more American demands. In December William Wells wrote that the British had given a "large quantity" of arms and ammunition to The Prophet's group.

A meeting of Potawatomi and Miami chiefs, still loyal to the United States, was called at Fort Wayne. They were promised arms and ammunition if The Prophet attacked them.

In August, 1810, Harrison met with Tecumseh. Tecumseh told him the Indians had been subjected to chronic mistreatment by the whites. He denied that separate tribes could sell the common Indian lands. The Shawnee told Harrison that he (Harrison) had negotiated the Treaty of Fort Wayne so the Indians would be confined to a small piece of land.

In October, 1810, another council was called at Fort Wayne by Harrison. The Indians were warned that "their Father" was becoming very angry at Tecumseh's conduct. The result of the gathering was the idea that the Fort Wayne Agency Indians would remain peaceable.

In April, 1811, Harrison sent William Wells and a man named Conner to The Prophet's camp to investigate a multiple murder. Tecumseh denied any connection with the murders and said he would repel the white advances. Wells replied that the Shawnee could not do this and Tecumseh replied that Wells would live to see it.

On August 22 Governor Harrison was authorized to break up The Prophet's camp, by force if necessary. In November Harrison advanced north against the settlement on the Tippecanoe River. The Indians met him, and after a savage battle, the Indians were defeated.

Tecumseh was away at the time trying to organize southern tribes against the white men. He arrived at his town on the Tippecanoe with his hopes shattered.

The outpost at the Three Rivers was put on the alert. The Fort Wayne Orderly Book records that on November 16, shortly after the Battle of Tippecanoe, officers of the guard were ordered to "pay particular attention to the sentinels and see that they do their duty strictly."



William Wells. Adopted son of Chief Little Turtle, Wells life was spent in the area of Fort Wayne.



## Chapter 5

### WAR--1812

On June 18, 1812, the United States declared war on England! The garrison orders then read: "In future as soon as a dancing party of Indians comes within fifty yards of the garrison, the guard will parade and stand by their arms until the party leaves it the same direction; And every soldier will immediately repair to the inside of the garrison and will be in readiness to take hold of his arms in case anything should happen, instantly, it is time for all soldiers to be on the lookout . . . this day the dancing party of Indians could have taken the garrison."

After the fall of Fort Michilimackinac, Fort Dearborn (Chicago) was ordered evacuated. The orders went by way of Fort Wayne. William Wells led a band of friendly Miamis to Chicago to escort the garrison of Fort Dearborn back to Fort Wayne.

At Chicago, Commander Nathan Heald (Captain James Rhea had replaced him earlier as commandant at Fort Wayne) gave away all supplies he and his men could not carry.

On August 14, with their dependents, they marched out of Fort Dearborn. About half a mile from the Fort they were attacked by Kickapoos and Winnebago Indians. Many of the column, including William Wells were killed. Others were made prisoners. Only a few escaped.

Fort Wayne was now in an open, dangerous position. Indians began roaming about the fort, angry as hornets, and now confident they could drive the white men out.

August 16 Detroit was surrendered to the Indians.

If the Indians at Dearborn and Detroit had

moved immediately on to Fort Wayne the post might have fallen. Instead they fell to plundering and only a small part of them trickled down to besiege Fort Wayne and Harrison (Vincennes).

When Commander Rhea heard the news from Chicago he lost his nerve. He sent a cry for help that read in part: ". . . for God sake try in some way to get some help forwarded to us . . . I expect if there is not something done we must fall a prey . . . they say there were about 600 Indians all together . . . (at Fort Dearborn)."

An Indian warned Antoine Bondie, a local trader and interpreter, of a plot in which the British had promised the Indians their artillery would knock down the palisades of Fort Wayne. Then the Fort could be taken, the garrison destroyed and the whole frontier to the Ohio River would again belong to the red men.

On August 28 a man named Stephen Johnston was fired on and killed. The gardens and fields about the Fort were plundered August 29 under a flag of truce. Rhea ordered that no soldier should leave the garrison after retreat without his orders. Rhea then took refuge from the crisis by becoming drunk every day.

On his way to help the Fort Wayne garrison, General Harrison received a message from Rhea "stating that a large body of Indians were near the Fort and Rhea expected to be attacked that night." Later he heard that a British party of 140 men and 400 Indians, under Tecumseh, had left Detroit with the ultimate purpose of attacking Fort Wayne and, if successful, Fort Harrison.

Harrison then detached 900 "choice men" to join another force from Ohio, to relieve Fort Wayne. He called for Kentucky Mounted Volunteers to hurry from Kentucky and Cincinnati and follow him to Fort Wayne.

He made a speech to his men that Fort Wayne could only be relieved by forced marches. Those who did not wish to risk their lives for their country, he said, were free to leave. Only one man did so.

It was rumored that a large body of Indians and British troops were on the way to Fort Wayne. Volunteers went ahead to spy out Fort Wayne. Stopping short of the Fort, they found it still holding and returned to meet Harrison who was coming from Piqua, Ohio.

While Harrison and his army marched northward, the siege at Fort Wayne continued. On the night of the 11th, the Indians made a desperate attack and failed. About 3:00 in the afternoon of September 12, Lt. Curtis related, "to our great joy, we saw army of about 3,000 approach."

Fort Wayne was relieved without a fight. The Indians melted away at the approach of the army.

The next morning Harrison asked Captain Rhea for his sword. He said, however, that charges of neglect of duty would be dropped against the commandant if he would resign. Rhea consented to do this.

During the rest of the War of 1812 Fort Wayne played only a small part. It served as a base of operations for pacifying the Indians and as part of a supply line to Fort Meigs (near Maumee, Ohio) and Detroit.

While the British and Indians were trying to take Fort Meigs from the Americans, very little went on at Fort Wayne. The Indian towns and fields about the fort at Three Rivers had been burned before the siege. They were still not rebuilt or replanted.

In November, 1812, Captain High Moore became commander of Fort Wayne. However, the Fort and garrison slumped under Moore's rule. When Major John Whistler came to Fort Wayne in 1813, he found the garrison small and "very sickly," with only

one officer fit for duty.

In January, 1814, about 1000 Miamis, mostly women and children, appeared in Fort Wayne. All were on the verge of starving. They asked for food, and received meat, flour and some ammunition.

Fort Wayne was the site of an Indian Agency even after the war. Beside the Indian agent, B. F. Stickney, there was an armourer, a blacksmith, and artificer and a laborer.

During his term as commandant of the Fort, Major Whistler began rebuilding the stronghold. In 1815 he noted that the pickets were decaying.

In the summer of the same year construction began. As many as 37 men were placed on duty. On August 21 men were employed hewing timber and as teamsters, sawyers and carpenters.

In October bad weather slowed construction. However, men were still chopping logs and repairing wagons. In January Whistler reported to the War Department that he was constructing six buildings of barkless white oak. Two of them were blockhouses, two stories high. The blockhouses were shingled, as were two of the other buildings. In them were sleeping quarters for the enlisted men. Troops were also quartered in two buildings that were not shingled.

Platforms were built in the lower story of the blockhouses. On them were placed "four small pieces of ordinance" (cannon) two in each blockhouse. In the upper story of each building there was one six pound cannon.

The roofs of the other buildings sloped inward to the parade grounds. This made it harder for the Indians to set them afire with torches or flaming arrows during attacks.

On the front parade side of the buildings there were roofed galleries, or porches. Here the soldiers were instructed to take care of their arms and clothes

"in place of doing such in their rooms," as Major Whistler said.

The pickets had been hauled from two or three miles away by oxen. Waste wood was kept inside this palisade and was used for fuel. Whistler ordered using this before cutting more trees.

Major Whistler waited until after danger of frost before putting the pickets into place. When the 1816 weather had finally cleared, chimneys and a brick magazine were built. "This fort is similar to Fort Dearborn," Major Whistler said, "but eight feet longer."

The Whistler plan of the Fort is reproduced in the center fold of this pamphlet. It conforms to the above description.

By April, 1816, Whistler reported that the garrison was entirely enclosed and that the pickets were "handsomely placed." Besides this he had caused two rooms to be built for the Fort contractor, as well as a storehouse for him. Quarters for the Fort interpreter had been built 200 yards away "under the guns" of the fort.

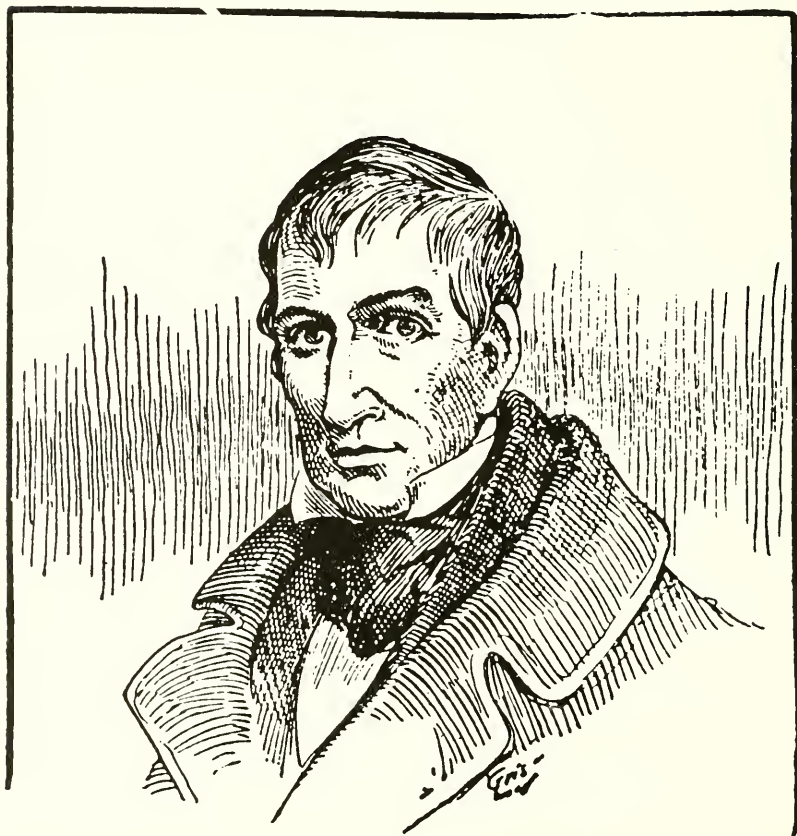
There was also a magazine built in which to store gun powder. For this he had built "two houses," one "inside the other." The walls were two feet apart and the space between was filled with clay. The top was covered with clay or sod to prevent being set afire. Whistler called it "bomb proof." Major Whistler had also built a blacksmith shop.

The Fort was almost finished in July. Whistler said it was capable of withstanding the attacks of any number of Indians. Some galleries were not completed and bricks were being made for chimneys. Floors waited until plank had been seasoned.

It was the best fort that had been built at Three Rivers, large enough to house two companies of soldiers. Major Whistler performed the task while car-

ing for his children, his wife having died on the way to Fort Wayne in November, 1814, after a long illness.

Soon after the fort was finished, however, the need for it declined. The Indians were being pushed on farther west, the frontier moving with them. The army felt the Indian danger at Fort Wayne was past. In April, 1819, the troops were moved farther west where they were more urgently needed.



**GENERAL WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON.**



## Chapter 6

### THE LAST BUGLE

The Fort had stood at the junction of Three Rivers for many years. Around it a settlement grew, with cabins, stores and wharves on the river fronts.

On September 18, 1817, a traveler named Tomas Dean visited the settlement. He left a short story of his visit. It reads in part: "We traveled rapidly through the mud and crossed several streams of water. Some of them were waist high or more, and several Indians passed us who were going to Fort Wayne. Their horses made the going still worse as they made the mud deeper. We crossed two or three creeks that were very deep, and some swampy marshes, and arrived at Fort Wayne about 8 o'clock in the evening, being very wet and much fatigued. We waded St. Marys River before we came to the Fort. Put up at the Hunt and Olivers, got supper of bread, milk, etc. and changed our clothes."

Reminiscences of A.C. Comparet contain the following information about the area: "My father moved up the Maumee River in 1818 on a pirogue as the only means of travel in those days, and settled in Fort Wayne where the St. Joe and St. Marys Rivers form the Maumee."

They go on to say that the principal inhabitants of the place were Indians. Two tribes were there at the time, the Miamis and the Potawatomis. The two tribes were not friendly to each other.

The Indians came to Fort Wayne in the spring and the fall to sell their furs. Hunting and trapping were the only ways of making a living in the wilderness.

George W. Ewing and Francis Comparet were the principal buyers and shippers in the fur trade. In



the spring the work of handling the furs, packing and getting them ready for market, was quite a job. Then they were hauled to the river, put on board pirogues bound for Maumee City (Toledo) and then taken to Buffalo, New York. The Fort council house and garrison remained standing for a long time, the recollections state.

Another early settler was Louis T. Bourie. As an Indian trader and interpreter, he came to Fort Wayne in 1762, before General Anthony Wayne built his fort. Later he became a warm personal friend of Anthony Wayne.

There were only two houses standing near the second French fort when he built a home there and brought his family to live. This old fort had been built in 1751 between the St. Joseph's and Maumee rivers. The area was then known as the "Old Apple Orchard" and is now known as Lakeside.

After living there for awhile he moved on to Detroit. Later he moved back to Fort Wayne. His daughter, Caroline Bourie, who set down the story, was a baby three months old at the time (1814).

They came, she said, by pirogue, it being large enough to hold trunks, bedding, passengers and a good stock of provisions for a long trip.

The only means of travel those days, she added, was by water or horseback; an occasional wagon came sometimes from Ohio or Kentucky. When her father and his family arrived, he found his house burned to the ground. It had been fired by the Indians.

While her father was building a new house the family lived in Whistler's Fort. They saw a great deal of military life there. The new house was built on what is now East Columbia Street, between Clinton and Barr streets, near the fort.

About the year 1822, this girl was sent to a school held in one of the Fort buildings. Her teacher

was a Baptist missionary named Isaac McCoy. She recalls that this same missionary baptized a daughter of William Wells.

She next went to school in the Indian Council House near the Fort. In one cupboard there she recalls were lots of tobacco to be sold or given to the Indians. Unruly boys were also shut up in this closet until, she said, some almost suffocated.

Her next classroom was in the jail situated where the County Courthouse now stands. The old jail was built of logs and she remembered a story about a man named Alexander, who was often put there for debts. As soon as he was put in, he got out. This happened so often that someone looked into the matter. It was found that Alexander merely pushed out a loose log, stepped out, and then replaced the log.

While people lived in a primitive way then, this lady said, they did not dress that way. "The ladies dresses were rich brocaded silks, satins, and Canton crepes. Life was very gay as the garrison was filled with officers and their families, and many parties were given."

The men were resplendent, some in their military uniforms, while the civilians wore broadcloth suits with satin vests and ruffled shirts, linen and satin and silk stocks.

George W. Brackenridge, an early settler, recalls that in 1830 timbers of the Fort stockade were still standing. "They were about a foot square, eight or ten feet high, pointed at the top. The stump of the flag pole was also in front of the two blockhouses, which occupied the high ground at the east end of Main Street. Both were built of hewn logs and were two stories high. There were two large rooms below and the same above, both lengthwise north and south."

The one farthest from the street was taken down when the canal was dug. The others stood many

years occupied by tenants. A blockhouse for storing arms and ammunition stood about seventy-five feet to the west. It had an all-around over jutting second story.

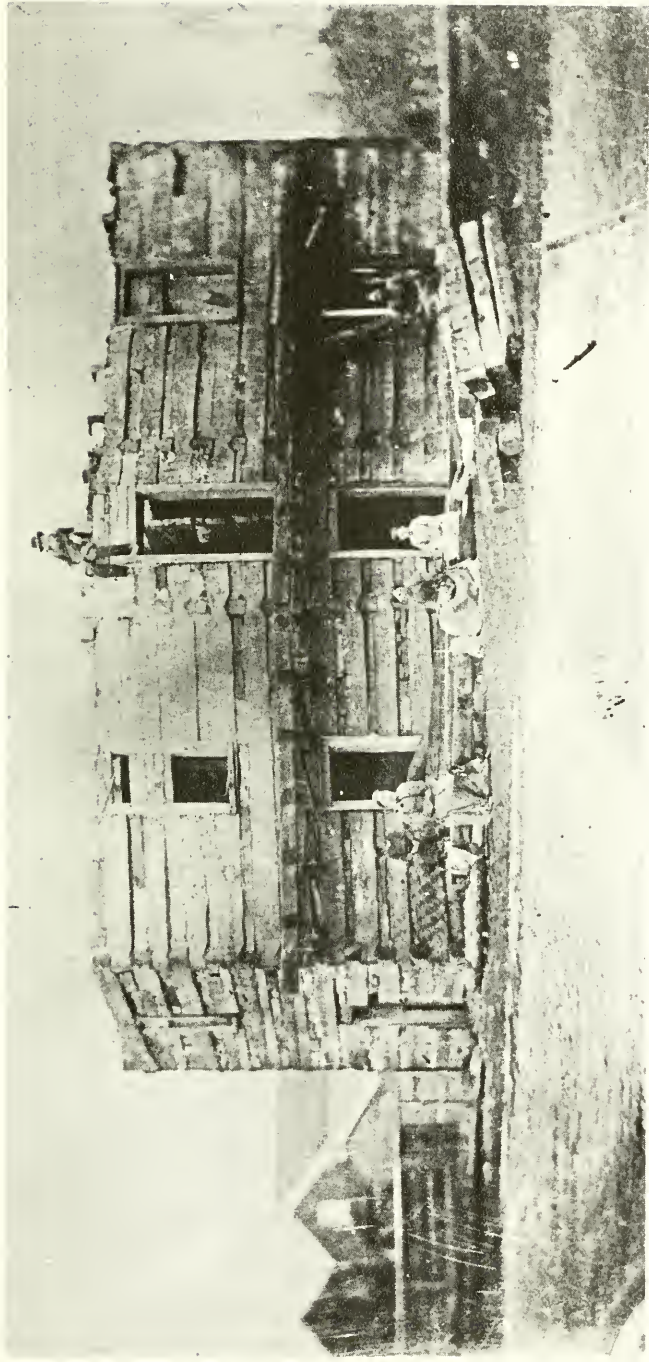
The Council House was a well constructed building of smooth hewn logs, two stories high, with two large rooms and a hall in the middle.

Brackenridge states that there came to Fort Wayne in the 1830's an eccentric man named John Chapman. Dressed like a beggar, he traveled on foot and went about looking for small fractions of land left in the public land surveys. These he bought, cleared, fenced with brush and planted apple seeds. We call him Johnny Appleseed today.

Another early Fort Wayne settler remembers that, in 1852, a short distance from her home she could see "the ruins of the old blockhouse, which had a mysterious and awesome look to us."

It is recorded that the last building of the Fort was torn down in 1852. No traces of it remain except the well, the top and sweep of which have been rebuilt and are visible today beside the Norfolk and Western Railroad tracks in Old Fort Park.

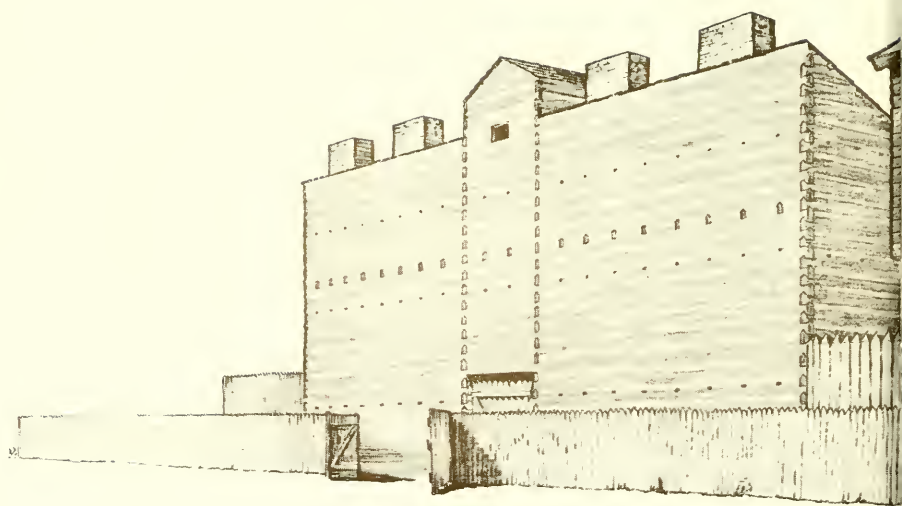
The memory of the Fort at Three Rivers will live on in the minds of men, however, as a beacon in the wilderness of the past.



This daguerreotype shows the remains of the officers quarters in 1852 as the structure was being razed. This scene and two others of the fort building is from the Historical Museum collections.













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